

PART V

CROPS

Major Crops

Ferry County cropland is mainly devoted to forage crops. Principal crops in the county are hay and small grains. The dominance of feed crops in the area is related to the important livestock industry. Also, the relatively short growing season in the area limits the crops that can be grown to the hardier plants. Harvested cropland in Ferry County was 19,519 acres in 1959. Most of the county's crops rely strictly on nature for water and only about 13 percent of harvested cropland was reported irrigated in 1959.

In 1962, more alfalfa hay was grown in Ferry County than any other single crop. Alfalfa was harvested from about 9,600 acres during that year. Second ranking crop in the county in terms of acreage was wheat--grown on 2,200 acres. Clover-timothy hay and barley followed in acreage among the more important crops of the county.

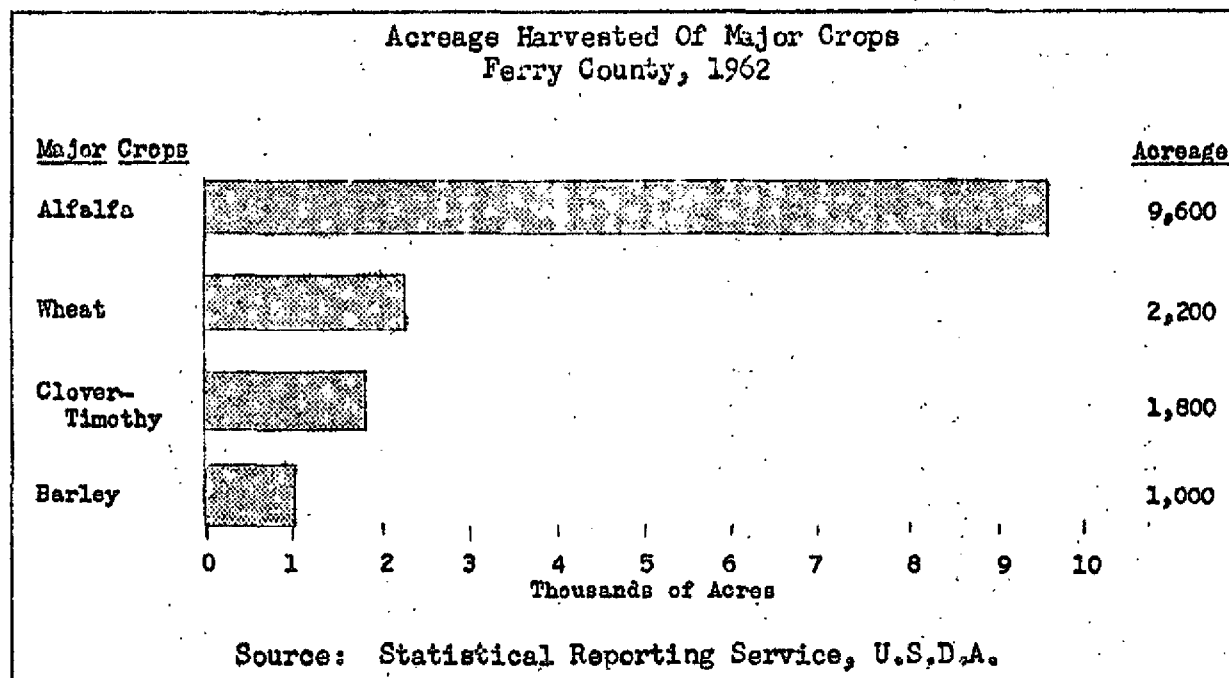


Figure 9. Major Crop Acreages, Ferry County, 1962.

Crop Trends

A number of trends are apparent in the acreages Ferry County farmers have planted to leading crops. These changes are part of an increasing emphasis in the area's livestock farming. Ferry County agriculture through crop specialization and intensification has become increasingly more valuable to the regional economy. The area has continued to specialize in hays and small grains although the acreage of some of these have decreased over the years. Other crops in the county--grown on a minor scale--have been generally decreasing in acreage and production over the years.

Hay Crops

For many years the most important crop in Ferry County from the acreage standpoint has been hay. About 81 percent of the county's harvested cropland was devoted to this crop in 1959. Land from which hay was cut amounted to 15,898 acres in that year.

The most prominent single crop in the county is alfalfa hay. Alfalfa in Ferry County has increased from 4,600 acres in 1939 to 9,600 in 1962 with some fluctuations during the intervening years. A peak acreage of 10,600 acres was reached in 1961. In 1962, 14,100 tons of alfalfa hay were harvested. Yields have been relatively good. Normally, hay is cut twice during the season. Differences noted in the county's past alfalfa yields have resulted from variations in the availability of moisture and the amount of sunshine and warmth during the growing season.

Table 15. Alfalfa Hay and Clover-Timothy Hay
Acreage, Yield and Production
Ferry County, 1939-1962

Year	Alfalfa Hay			Clover and Timothy Hay		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (Tons Per Acre)	Production (Tons)	Harvested Acres	Yield (Tons Per Acre)	Production (Tons)
1939	4,600	1.7	7,800	800	1.6	1,300
1940	5,000	1.6	8,000	700	2.4	1,700
1941	5,400	2.8	15,100	800	1.9	1,530
1942	5,700	2.5	14,300	1,100	2.2	2,400
1943	6,200	1.2	7,400	1,300	.8	1,000
1944	6,900	1.9	13,100	1,660	1.6	2,600
1945	6,800	1.9	13,000	1,800	1.4	2,600
1946	7,100	1.9	13,600	2,100	1.6	3,300
1947	6,500	1.8	12,000	1,900	1.5	2,900
1948	7,100	2.0	14,200	1,700	1.8	3,000
1949	7,400	1.5	11,100	1,600	1.4	2,200
1950	7,100	1.4	9,900	1,500	1.4	1,600
1951	8,000	1.4	11,200	1,500	1.4	2,100
1952	8,200	1.1	9,100	1,400	1.6	2,200
1953	8,900	2.3	20,600	1,500	1.5	2,200
1954	9,100	1.7	15,400	1,250	1.5	1,900
1955	9,200	1.6	14,700	1,350	1.5	2,000
1956	8,000	1.8	14,400	1,400	1.1	1,600
1957	8,500	1.7	14,400	1,700	1.5	2,600
1958	9,000	1.7	15,300	1,500	2.0	3,000
1959	10,000	1.5	15,000	1,800	1.6	2,800
1960	9,300	1.6	14,600	2,000	1.1	2,200
1961	10,600	1.8	18,600	2,000	.9	1,800
1962	9,600	1.5	14,100	1,800	1.7	3,100

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

In 1959, over three-fourths of Ferry County farms reported growing alfalfa. The bulk of the crop is used on farms where grown but a few farmers produce for the commercial market. Forty-four of the 214 farms which grew alfalfa in 1959

reported sales of this hay off the farm. About 7 percent of the harvested tonnage was sold during the year.

Ferry County's main alfalfa acreages are located in the northwestern part of the county between Republic and the Canadian border. Other areas include the lands adjacent to Roosevelt Lake and Kettle River at the eastern border. There is also some alfalfa acreage in parts of southwestern Ferry County.

Clover-timothy hay also is an important crop in the county in terms of harvested acreage. In 1962, there were 1,800 acres of clover-timothy from which 3,100 tons of hay were harvested. Both acreage and production have increased substantially since 1939. From 800 acres in 1939, land devoted to clover-timothy increased to a high of 2,100 acres in 1946. Since then, the acreage has gone down as far as 1,250 acres in 1954 but more recently it has remained above 1,800 acres. Most of the clover-timothy hay is consumed on farms where grown with only a small percentage sold off the farms annually. The largest acreage of clover-timothy hay is located in the Curlew Lake, Curlew Creek and Kettle River area of northwestern Ferry County. There is some clover-timothy production in the Inchellium area near the eastern boundary of the county.

Green cutting of small grains (wheat, barley, oats and rye) for hay in the county has declined. The acreage cut decreased from 5,118 in 1949 to 4,920 in 1954 and 3,050 in 1959. In 1959, about 3,550 tons of small grains were harvested for hay. The county's wild hay production also has decreased in recent years. Wild hay was cut from only 219 acres in 1959 compared with 1,451 in 1954 and 810 in 1949. Other hays including vetch were cut from a total of 687 acres in 1959, an increase from the 493 acres in 1954. Production increased from 572 tons in 1954 to 840 tons in 1959.

Silage cut from alfalfa, grass and grain is increasingly important in Ferry County. In 1954, the county's farmers put up 700 tons of silage compared with 2,720 tons in 1959. The acreage cut increased from 160 to 384 in the five-year period. Census data indicate that there was no silage production in 1949 in the county. Farmers have found that cutting hay fields for silage furnishes a high quality, succulent feed and reduces feed losses caused by occasional wet weather during hay harvesting. Silage is used mostly for feeding dairy cattle, especially during the winter months. Grass silage production is found scattered in the agricultural areas of the county.

Small Grains: Wheat, Barley, Oats and Rye

As a group, small grains constitutes the second most important crop in Ferry County in terms of acreage. According to the Census of Agriculture in 1959, around 3,660 acres were devoted to wheat, barley, oats and rye which represented about 19 percent of the county's total harvested cropland. In 1962, the total acreage of these small grains amounted to 3,500 acres.

As an individual crop, wheat ranked second in the county in terms of acreage in 1962. Since 1939, total wheat acreage has fluctuated between 1,500 in 1940 and 7,700 in 1952. In 1962, about 2,290 acres were devoted to wheat. The total acreage in 1962 was composed of 52 percent winter wheat and 48 percent spring wheat. More acreage was usually devoted to spring wheat than to winter wheat before 1958 but since then, the opposite case has been true.

Table 16. Winter Wheat and Spring Wheat
Ferry County, 1939-1962

Year	Winter Wheat			Spring Wheat		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (Bushels Per Acre)	Production (Bushels)	Harvested Acres	Yield (Bushels Per Acre)	Production (Bushels)
1939	1,180	16.9	19,980	2,220	14.0	33,020
1940	1,500	20.0	30,000	1,500	12.0	18,000
1941	1,000	16.0	16,000	2,000	16.0	32,000
1942	1,100	23.1	25,400	1,700	18.0	30,600
1943	400	30.0	12,000	2,700	15.0	40,500
1944	820	22.2	18,170	2,600	18.0	46,830
1945	900	26.0	23,400	2,000	17.0	34,000
1946	700	24.0	16,800	2,800	19.0	53,200
1947	200	20.0	4,000	3,800	14.5	55,100
1948	100	20.0	2,000	4,100	14.9	61,000
1949	2,400	17.0	40,800	2,800	12.5	35,000
1950	1,100	31.0	34,100	3,200	19.0	60,800
1951	1,600	22.0	35,200	4,000	21.5	86,000
1952	3,900	22.0	85,800	3,800	15.0	57,000
1953	1,800	32.0	57,600	3,700	20.0	74,000
1954	1,500	33.0	49,500	2,600	22.5	58,500
1955	1,800	35.0	63,000	2,000	19.0	38,000
1956	600	17.0	10,200	2,700	29.0	78,300
1957	1,300	34.0	44,200	1,920	27.5	52,800
1958	1,960	32.5	63,700	1,940	10.0	19,400
1959	1,200	31.0	37,200	1,100	24.0	26,400
1960	1,330	25.0	33,250	1,140	12.0	13,680
1961	1,400	35.0	49,000	880	23.0	20,240
1962	1,150	44.0	50,600	1,050	22.0	23,100

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Ferry County's wheat yields generally have increased over the years since 1939. About 15.6 bushels per acre were harvested in 1939 compared with 33.5 bushels in 1962. Winter wheat yields have consistently been higher than those for spring wheat. In 1962, yield per acre for winter wheat was 44 bushels compared with 22 bushels per acre for spring wheat. The total 1962 wheat production in Ferry County amounted to 73,700 bushels, consisting of 50,600 bushels of winter wheat and 23,100 bushels of spring wheat.

Several varieties of wheat are grown in Ferry County. In 1962, wheat production was divided about evenly between White Club and Common White. The four main varieties of wheat grown in the county were Idaed, Elmar, Omar and Burt.

In 1959, 39 Ferry County farms reported growing winter wheat while 50 were enumerated as having spring wheat. Wheat is grown in the valleys of northwestern Ferry County and in the area around Inchelium near the eastern boundary.

Table 17. Varieties of Wheat Grown
in Ferry County, 1962

Classes and Varieties of Wheat	Production (Bushels)	Percent of Total Crop
<u>Common White Wheats</u>		
Idaad	22,400	30.4
Burt	13,000	17.6
Marfed	700	1.0
Brevor	600	0.8
<u>White Club Wheats</u>		
Elmar	20,400	27.7
Omar	16,600	22.5
Total all classes and varieties	73,700	100.0

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Table 18. Wheat and Barley: Acreage, Yield and Production
Ferry County, 1939-1962

Year	All Wheat			Barley		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (bushels per Acre)	Production (bushels)	Harvested Acres	Yield (bushels per Acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	3,400	15.6	53,000	770	23.0	17,700
1940	1,500	20.0	30,000	900	16.0	14,400
1941	3,000	16.0	48,000	1,200	29.0	34,800
1942	2,800	20.0	56,000	2,050	27.5	56,400
1943	3,100	16.9	52,500	1,410	26.0	36,700
1944	3,420	19.0	65,000	1,670	24.0	40,100
1945	2,900	19.8	57,400	1,250	23.0	28,800
1946	3,500	20.0	70,000	1,260	23.0	29,000
1947	4,000	14.8	59,100	1,420	40.0	56,800
1948	4,200	15.0	63,000	1,490	35.0	52,200
1949	5,200	14.6	75,800	1,100	21.0	23,100
1950	4,300	22.1	94,900	1,800	29.0	52,200
1951	5,600	21.6	121,200	1,400	26.0	36,400
1952	7,700	18.5	142,800	900	28.0	25,200
1953	5,500	23.9	131,600	950	26.0	24,700
1954	4,100	26.3	108,000	1,200	26.0	31,200
1955	3,800	26.6	101,000	1,200	22.0	26,400
1956	3,300	26.8	88,500	2,170	18.0	39,060
1957	3,220	30.1	97,000	3,300	27.0	89,100
1958	3,900	21.3	83,100	1,000	30.0	30,000
1959	2,300	27.7	63,600	1,400	22.5	31,500
1960	2,470	19.0	46,930	700	11.0	7,700
1961	2,280	30.4	69,240	1,100	28.9	31,800
1962	2,200	33.5	73,700	1,000	33.8	33,800

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Barley is the second most important grain crop grown in Ferry County. Acreage has fluctuated considerably from year to year since 1939, amounting to as little as 700 acres in 1960 and as much as the high of 3,300 acres in 1957. Yields also have varied greatly from one season to another. For example, it was 11.0 bushels per acre in 1960 compared with 33.8 bushels in 1962. In 1962, 33,800 bushels were harvested from 1,000 acres. When grain farmers accepted wheat acreage allotment quotas after 1953, barley was usually sown on land taken out of wheat. In 1959, 47 Ferry County farms reported having barley. During that year, about 39 percent of the barley harvested was sold off the farm. Barley is produced in the valleys of northwestern Ferry County as well as in the Inchelium district.

Table 19. Oats and Rye: Acreage, Yield and Production
Ferry County, 1939-1962

Year	Oats			Rye		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)	Harvested Acres	Yield (bushels per acre)	Production (bushels)
1939	800	28.0	22,400	540	10.0	5,400
1940	800	23.0	18,400	330	10.0	3,300
1941	800	30.5	24,400	400	10.0	4,000
1942	1,000	34.0	34,000	500	8.0	4,000
1943	1,100	30.5	33,500	620	11.9	7,400
1944	1,100	20.5	32,700	720	11.1	8,000
1945	1,400	28.0	39,200	480	13.3	6,400
1946	1,100	37.0	40,700	530	13.0	6,900
1947	1,200	47.0	56,400	1,000	10.0	10,000
1948	1,500	28.0	42,000	750	14.0	10,500
1949	1,500	26.0	39,000	400	13.0	5,200
1950	1,700	41.5	70,500	350	12.0	4,200
1951	1,400	28.0	39,200	320	13.2	4,210
1952	1,100	35.0	38,500	390	10.9	4,270
1953	1,500	35.0	52,500	470	18.5	8,700
1954	1,400	30.5	42,700	550	10.0	5,500
1955	1,400	40.0	56,000	1,000	9.0	9,000
1956	1,050	21.0	22,000	690	9.5	6,560
1957	880	33.0	29,000	100	18.5	1,850
1958	730	35.5	27,700	100	18.0	1,800
1959	800	30.5	24,400	120	15.0	1,800
1960	520	30.0	15,600	110	12.0	1,320
1961	450	40.0	18,000	100	20.0	2,000
1962	200	38.0	7,600	100	15.0	1,500

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Oats represent a relatively minor crop in Ferry County agriculture. In 1939, oats were harvested from about 800 acres in Ferry County. Oats acreage increased to reach a high of 1,700 acres in 1950. Since 1950, the trend in acreage has been downward. In 1962, only 200 acres were devoted to oats. Since 1939, the county's oats yields have ranged from 20.5 bushels per acre in 1944 to 47 bushels per acre in 1947. In 1962, 7,600 bushels were harvested from the 200 acres—a yield of 38 bushels per acre. According to the Census of Agriculture, 37 farms raised oats

within Ferry County in 1959. During that year, about 41 percent of the oats harvested was sold off the farm. Oats are grown in the same areas of the county as wheat.

Rye has assumed the position of a secondary grain crop for many years in Ferry County. In 1962, only 100 acres were grown which produced 1,500 bushels. The 1959 Census data indicate that only 9 county farms grew rye. These farms sold about 60 percent of the total amount harvested during that year.

Potatoes and Field Corn

Potatoes have been a minor commercial crop since pioneer days of Ferry County. Census figures show a drop in potato growing since 1920 when 584 acres were harvested. By 1959, land devoted to potatoes was estimated at 30 acres. Latest Census data indicate that 60 farms in the county grew potatoes for home use and for sale in 1959. In 1962, about 130 tons of potatoes were harvested from 30 acres.

Table 20. Potatoes: Acreage, Yield and Production
Ferry County, 1949-1962

Year	Potatoes		
	Harvested Acres	Yield (Hundredweight per Acre)	Production (Hundredweight)
1949	75	70	5,250
1950	100	80	8,000
1951	80	80	7,200
1952	60	100	6,000
1953	40	110	4,400
1954	60	113	6,800
1955	60	100	6,000
1956	50	100	5,000
1957	50	100	5,000
1958	40	80	3,200
1959	30	167	5,000
1960	30	167	5,000
1961	30	80	2,400
1962	30	87	2,600

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Field corn production in Ferry County has virtually disappeared. In earlier years, it was grown for grain and silage. The downward trend in field corn production began in 1940 when a high of 410 acres was reached.

Tree Fruits and Grapes

According to the Census of Agriculture, the acreage of orchards and vineyards in Ferry County has steadily decreased since 1945 when there were over 100 acres of orchard. In 1959, 8 farms reported a total of only 43 acres devoted to tree fruits and grapes in the county. Apples, peaches and cherries were the predominant fruits harvested. Many farms have small plantings of fruit trees where the production is for home use only. Several factors have discouraged large scale

commercial production of fruit in the region. These include a short growing season, lack of extensive irrigation and remoteness from fruit marketing centers.

Other Crops: Vegetables, Berries and Field Seed Crops

Commercial production of vegetables is very minor in Ferry County. In 1959, 174 farms reported growing vegetables for home use compared with only 1 farm which reported vegetables harvested for sale. Land devoted to vegetables for sale was reported only in small fractions in 1959. Vegetable acreage in the county has decreased considerably since the 1930's when there were nearly 80 acres harvested for sale. The main drawbacks to commercial vegetable growing in the area is its short growing season and distance from population centers.

Ferry County's berry production has always been of minor proportions. Only 2 farms reported growing strawberries while raspberries were raised by 3 farms in 1959. Acreage and production were of very nominal levels during the year.

The Census of Agriculture data reveal that only 8 acres of Ferry County's cropland was devoted to field seed crops in 1959. A total of 800 pounds of alfalfa and wheatgrass seed were produced during the year. This represented an increase from the 200 pounds of seed which were reported harvested in 1954.